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MORNINGS IN FLORENCE

V.

THE STRAIT GATE.

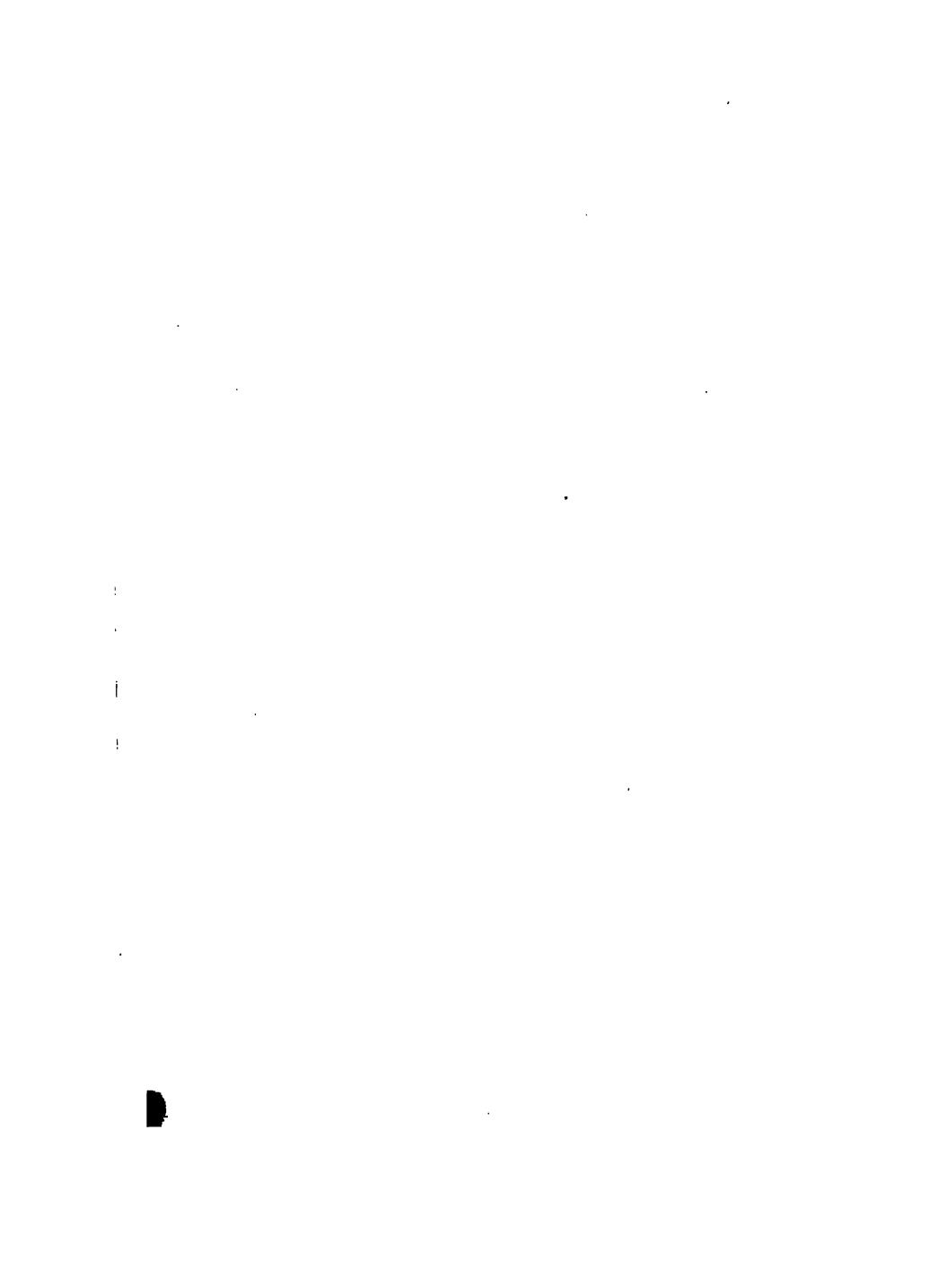
RUSKIN.



137 f. 37
S



Her joy is on
Forest Key
Northwick



P. L.
in
a
letter
of
the
15th

MORNINGS IN FLORENCE.



MORNINGS IN FLORENCE:

BEING

SIMPLE STUDIES

OF

CHRISTIAN ART,

FOR ENGLISH TRAVELLERS.

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, LLD.,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH,
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V.

THE STRAIT GATE.

SECOND EDITION. (REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.)

G E O R G E A L L E N,
S U N N Y S I D E , O R P I N G T O N , K E N T .

—
1882.

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Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Printers, London and Aylesbury.

THE FIFTH MORNING.

THE STRAIT GATE.

[I have revised the text of this edition with care ; holding it one of the most important minor letters I have written, in its aphorisms of principle with respect to education. Some valuable observations and corrections, made for me by Mr. G. Collingwood, at Florence, this year, are subjoined in the notes at the bottom of the pages.—J. RUSKIN. *Lucca, October 12th, 1882.*]

AS you return this morning to St. Mary's, you may as well observe—the matter before us being concerning gates,—that the western façade of the church is of two periods. Your Murray refers it all to the latest of these,—I forget when, and do not care,—in which the largest flanking columns, and the entire effective mass of the walls, with their riband mosaics and high pediment, were built in front of, and above, what the barbarian renaissance designer chose to leave of the pure old Dominican church. You may see his ungainly jointing at the pedestals of the great columns, running through the pretty, parti-coloured base, which, with the 'Strait' Gothic doors, and the entire lines of the fronting and flanking tombs, (where not restored by the devil-begotten brood of

modern Florence), is of pure, and exquisitely severe and refined, fourteenth century Gothic, with superbly carved bearings on its shields. The small detached line of tombs on the left, untouched in its sweet colour and living weed ornament, I would fain have painted, stone by stone : but one can never draw in front of a church in these republican days ; for all the blackguard children of the neighbourhood come to howl, and throw stones, on the steps, and the ball or stone play against these sculptured tombs, as a dead wall adapted for that purpose only, is incessant in the fine days when I could have worked.*

If you enter by the door most to the left, or north, and turn immediately to the right, on the interior of the wall of the façade is an Annunciation, visible enough because well preserved, though in the dark ; and extremely pretty in its way,—of the decorated and ornamental school following Giotto :—I can't guess by whom, nor does it much matter ; but it is well to look at it by way of contrast with the delicate, intense, slightly decorated design of Memmi,—in which, when you return into the Spanish chapel, you will feel the dependence for its effect on broad masses of white and pale amber, where the decorative school would have had mosaic of red, blue, and gold.

* I have since bought for St. George's Museum a drawing of these three arches, carried out with more patience than I possessed, by Mr. Henry R. Newman.

Our first business this morning must be to read and understand the writing on the book held open by St. Thomas Aquinas, for that informs us of the meaning of the whole picture.

It is this text from the Book of Wisdom VII. 6.

“ Optavi, et datus est mihi sensus.
Invocavi, et venit in me Spiritus Sapientiae,
Et preposui illam regnis et sedibus.”

“ I willed, and Sense was given me.
I prayed, and the Spirit of Wisdom came upon me
And I set her before, (preferred her to,) kingdoms
and thrones.”

The common translation in our English Apocrypha loses the entire meaning of this passage, which—not only as the statement of the experience of Florence in her own education, but as universally descriptive of the process of all noble education whatever—we had better take pains to understand.

First, says Florence, “ I willed, (in sense of resolutely desiring,) and Sense was given me.” You must begin your education with the distinct *resolution* to know what is true, and choice of the strait and rough road to such knowledge. This choice is offered to every youth and maid at some moment of their life ; choice between the easy downward road, so broad that we can dance down it in companies, and the steep narrow

way, which we must enter alone.* Then, and for many a day afterwards, they need that form of persistent Option, and Will : but day by day, the ‘Sense’ of the rightness of what they have done, deepens on them, not in consequence of the effort, but by gift granted in reward of it. And the Sense of difference between right and wrong, and between beautiful and unbeautiful things, is confirmed in the heroic, and fulfilled in the industrious, soul.

That is the process of education in the earthly sciences, and the morality connected with them. Reward given to faithful *Volition*.

Next, when Moral and Physical senses are perfect, comes the desire for education in the higher world, where the senses are no more our Teachers ; but the Maker of the senses. And that teaching, we cannot get by labour, but only by petition.

“ Invocavi, et venit in me Spiritus Sapientiae”— “I prayed, and the Spirit of Wisdom,” (not, you observe, *was given*,† but,) “came upon me.” The *personal* power of Wisdom : the “σοφία” or Santa Sophia, to whom the first great Christian temple was dedicated. This higher wisdom, governing by her presence, all earthly conduct, and by her

* ‘Alone’ is too strong a word for what I meant, namely, that however helped or guided by our friends, masters, and predecessors, each of us determines for himself, in the critical moments, what his life is to be, when it is right. To the wrong, we may always flow with the stream.

† I, in careless error, wrote “was given” in ‘Fors Clavigera.’

teaching, all earthly art, Florence tells you, she obtained only by prayer.

And these two Earthly and Divine sciences are expressed beneath, in the symbols of their divided powers ;—Seven terrestrial, Seven Celestial, whose names have been already indicated to you :—in which figures I must point out one or two technical matters before attempting their interpretation. They are all by Simon Memmi originally ; but repainted, many of them all over, some hundred years later,—(certainly after the discovery of America, as you will see)—by an artist of considerable power, and some feeling for the general action of the figures ; but of no refinement or carefulness. He dashes paint in huge spaces over the subtle old work ; puts in his own chiaro-oscuro where all had been shadeless, and his own violent colour where all had been pale ; and repaints the faces, so as to make them, to his notion, prettier and more human : some of this upper work has, however, come away since, and the original outline, at least, is traceable ; while in the face of the Logic, the Music, and, one or two others, the original work is very pure. Being most interested myself in the earthly sciences, I had a scaffolding put up, made on a level with them, and examined them inch by inch, and the following report will be found accurate until next repainting.

For interpretation of them, you must always take the central figure of the Science, with the

little medallion above it, and the figure below, all together. Which I proceed to do, reading first from left to right for the earthly sciences, and then from right to left the heavenly ones, to the centre, where their two highest powers sit, side by side.

We begin, then, with the first in the list given above, (Vaulted Book, page 118) : Grammar, in the corner farthest from the window.

SECTION I.

The Seven Earthly Sciences ; read from right to left, from the corner opposite the window, to the centre of the side wall.

I. GRAMMAR : more properly Grammaticè, "Grammatic Art," the Art of *Letters* or "Literature," or—using the word which to some English ears will carry most weight with it,—"Scripture," and its use. The Art of faithfully reading what has been written for our learning; and of clearly writing what we would make immortal of our thoughts. Power which consists first in recognizing letters ; secondly, in forming them ; thirdly, in the understanding and choice of words which, errorless, shall express our thought. Severe exercises all, reaching—very few living persons know, how far ; beginning properly in childhood, and then only to be truly acquired. It is wholly impossible—this I say from too sorrowful experience—to conquer by any effort or time, habits of the hand (much more of head, and soul,) with which the vase of flesh has

been formed and filled in youth,—the law of God being that parents *shall compel** the child in the day of its obedience into habits of hand, and eye, and soul, which, when it is old, shall not, by any strength, or any weakness, be departed from.

“Enter ye in,” therefore, says Grammaticè, “at the Strait Gate.” She points through it with her rod, holding a fruit (?) for reward, in her left hand. The gate is very strait indeed—her own waist no less so,† her hair fastened close. She had once a white veil binding it, which is lost. Not a gushing form of literature, this,—or in any wise disposed to subscribe to Mudie’s, my English friends—or even patronize Tauchnitz editions of—what is the last new novel you see ticketed up to-day in Mr. Goodban’s window? She looks kindly down, nevertheless, to the three children whom she is teaching—two boys and a girl: (Qy. Does this mean that one girl out of every two should not be able to read or write? I am quite willing to accept that inference, for my own part,—should perhaps even say, two girls out of three). This girl is of the highest classes, crowned,‡ her golden hair falling behind her, the

* I italicize this primary sentence : the word ‘compel’ may be read in its mildest sense by really good parents, whose steps their children follow in pure love.

† I don’t see that her waist is straighter than other people’s ; and she has neither stays nor girdle.—(G. C.)

‡ The crown has been since effaced by advancing decay.
—(G. C.)

Florentine girdle round her hips—(not waist, the object being to leave the lungs full play ; but to keep the dress always well down in dancing or running). The boys are of good birth also, the nearest one with luxuriant curly hair—only the profile of the farther one seen. All reverent and eager. Above, the medallion is of a figure looking at a fountain. Underneath, Lord Lindsay says, Priscian, and is, I doubt not, right.

Technical Points.—The figure is said by Crowe to be entirely repainted. The *dress* is so, throughout,—both the hands also ;—the fruit, and rod. But the eyes, mouth, hair above the forehead, and outline of the rest, with the faded veil, and happily, the traces left of the children, are genuine; the strait gate perfectly so, in the colour underneath, though reinforced ; and the action of the entire figure is well preserved : but there is a curious question about both the rod and fruit. Seen close, the former perfectly assumes the shape of folds of dress gathered up over the raised right arm, and I am not absolutely sure that the restorer has not mistaken the folds—at the same time changing a pen or style into a rod. The fruit also I have doubts of, as fruit is not so rare at Florence that it should be made a reward. It is entirely and roughly repainted, and is oval in shape. In Giotto's Charity, luckily not restored, at Assisi, the guide-books have always mistaken the heart she holds for

an apple :—and my own belief is that originally, the Grammatice of Simon Memmi made with her right hand the sign which said, “Enter ye in at the Strait Gate,” and with her left, the sign which said, “My son, give me thine Heart.”

II. RHETORIC. Next to learning how to read and write, you are to learn to speak ; and, young ladies and gentlemen, observe,—to speak as little as possible, it is farther implied, till you *have* learned.

In the streets of Florence at this day you may hear much of what some people would call “rhetoric”—very passionate speaking indeed, and quite “from the heart”—such hearts as the people have got.* That is to say, you never hear a word uttered but in a rage, either just ready to burst, or for the most part, explosive instantly : everybody—man, woman, or child—roaring out their incontinent, foolish, infinitely contemptible opinions and wills, on every smallest occasion, with flashing eyes, hoarsely shrieking and wasted voices,—insane hope to drag by vociferation whatever they would have, out of man and God.

Now consider Simon Memmi’s Rhetoric. The science of *Speaking* ; primarily of making oneself *heard* therefore : which is not to be done by shouting. She alone, of all the sciences, carries a scroll :

* Very noble hearts the *people*,—meaning the peasantry,—have : but the streets of the great cities bring all evil to the surface, and continually multiply and reverberate its power.

and although a speaker, gives you something to read. It is not thrust forward at you at all, but held quietly down with her beautiful depressed right hand ; her left hand set coolly and strongly on her side.

And you will find that, thus, she alone of all the sciences *needs no use of her hands*. All the others have some important business for them ;—she, none. She can do all with her lips, holding scroll, or bridle, or what you will, with her right hand, her left on her side.

Again, look at the talkers in the streets of Florence, and see how, being essentially *unable* to talk, they try to make lips of their fingers ! How they poke, wave, flourish, point, jerk, shake finger and fist at their antagonists—dumb essentially, all the while, if they knew it ; unpersuasive and ineffectual, as the shaking of tree branches in the wind.

You will at first think her figure ungainly and stiff. It is so, partly ; the dress being more coarsely repainted than in any other of the series. But she is meant to be both stout and strong. What she has to say is indeed to persuade you, if possible ; but assuredly to overpower you. And *she* has not the Florentine girdle, for she does not want to move. She has her girdle broad at the waist—of all the sciences, you would at first have thought, the one that most needed breath ! No, says Simon Memmi. You want breath to run, or dance, or fight with.

But to speak!—If you know *how*, you can do your work with few words ; very little of this pure Florentine air will be enough, if you shape it rightly.

Note, also, that calm setting of her hand against her side. You think Rhetoric should be glowing, fervid, impetuous? No, says Simon Memmi. Above all things,—*cool*.

And now let us read what is written on her scroll :—*Mulceo, dum loquor, varios induta colores.*

Her chief function, to melt ; make soft, thaw the hearts of men with kind fire ; to overpower with peace ; and bring rest, with rainbow colours. The chief mission of all words that they should be of comfort.

You think the function of words is to excite ? Why, a red rag will do that, or a blast through a brass pipe. But to give calm and gentle *heat* ; to be as the south wind, and the iridescent rain, to all bitterness of frost ; and bring at once strength, and healing. This is the work of human lips, taught of God.

One farther and final lesson is given in the medallion above. Aristotle, and too many modern rhetoricians of his school, thought there could be good speaking in a false cause. But above Simon Memmi's Rhetoric is *Truth*, with her mirror.*

There is a curious feeling, almost innate in men,

* Same figure as Rhetoric, plus the mirror. Memmi therefore thinks Rhetoric and Truth are one.—(G.C.)

that though they are bound to speak truth, in speaking to a single person, they may lie as much as they please, provided they lie to two or more people at once. There is the same feeling about killing : most people would shrink from shooting one innocent man ; but will fire a mitrailleuse contentedly into an innocent regiment.

When you look down from the figure of the Science, to that of Cicero, beneath, you will at first think it entirely overthrows my conclusion that Rhetoric has no need of her hands. For Cicero, it appears, has *three* instead of two.

The uppermost, at his chin, is the only genuine one. That raised, with the finger up, is entirely false. That on the book, is repainted so as to defy conjecture of its original action.

But observe how the gesture of the true one confirms, instead of overthrowing, what I have said above. Cicero is not speaking at all, but profoundly thinking *before* he speaks. It is the most abstractedly thoughtful face to be found among all the philosophers ; and very beautiful. The whole is under Solomon, in the line of Prophets.

Technical Points.—These two figures have suffered from restoration more than any others, but the right hand of Rhetoric is still entirely genuine, and the left, except the ends of the fingers. The ear, and hair just above it, are quite safe, the head

well set on its original line, but the crown of leaves rudely retouched, and then faded. All the lower part of the figure of Cicero has been not only repainted, but changed; the face is genuine—I believe retouched; but so cautiously and skilfully, that it is probably now more beautiful than at first.

III. LOGIC. The science of Reasoning, or more accurately Reason herself, or pure intelligence.

Science to be gained *after* that of Expression, says Simon Memmi; so, young people, it appears, that though you must not speak before you have been taught how to speak, you may yet properly speak before you have been taught how to think.

For indeed, it is only by frank speaking that you *can* learn how to think. And it is no matter how wrong the first thoughts you have may be, provided you express them clearly;—and are willing to have them put right.

Fortunately, nearly all of this beautiful figure is virtually safe, the outlines pure everywhere, and the face perfect: the *prettiest*, as far as I know, which exists in Italian art of this early date. It is subtle to the extreme in gradations of colour: the eyebrows drawn, not with a sweep of the brush, but with separate cross touches in the line of their growth—absolutely pure in arch; the nose straight and fine; the lips—playful slightly, proud, unerringly cut; the hair flowing in sequent waves,

ordered as if in musical time ; head perfectly upright on the shoulders ; the height of the brow completed by a crimson frontlet set with pearls, surmounted by a *fleur-de-lys*.

Her shoulders are exquisitely drawn, her white jacket fitting close to soft, yet scarcely rising breasts ; her arms singularly strong, at perfect rest ; her hands, exquisitely delicate. In her right, she holds a branching and leaf-bearing rod, (the syllogism) ; in her left, a scorpion with double sting, (the dilemma)—more generally, the powers of rational construction and dissolution.*

Beneath her, Aristotle,—intense keenness of search in his half-closed eyes.

Medallion above, (less expressive than usual) a man writing, with his head stooped.

The whole under Isaiah, in the line of Prophets.

Technical Points.—The only parts of this figure which have suffered seriously in repainting are the leaves of the rod, and the scorpion. I have no idea, as I said above, what the background once was ; it is now a mere mess of scrabbled grey, carried over the vestiges, still with care much redeemable, of the richly ornamental extremity of the rod, which was a cluster of green leaves on a black ground. But the scorpion is indecipherably injured, most of it confused repainting, mixed with the white of the dress, the

* See farther the notes on Polemic Theology, page 151.

double sting emphatic enough still, but not on the first lines.

The Aristotle is very genuine throughout, except his hat, and I think that must be nearly on the old lines, though I cannot trace them. They are good lines, new or old.

IV. MUSIC. After you have learned to reason, young people, of course you will be very grave, if not dull, you think. No, says Simon Memmi. By no means anything of the kind. After learning to reason, you will learn to sing ; for you will want to. There is so much reason for singing in the sweet world, when one thinks rightly of it. None for grumbling, provided always you *have* entered in at the strait gate. You will sing all along the road then, in a little while, in a manner pleasant for other people to hear.

This figure has been one of the loveliest in the series, an extreme refinement and tender severity being aimed at throughout. She is crowned, not with laurel, but with small leaves,—I am not sure what they are, being too much injured : the face thin, abstracted, wistful ; the lips not far open in their low singing ; the hair rippling softly on the shoulders. She plays on a small organ, richly ornamented with Gothic tracery, the slope of it set with crockets like those of Santa Maria del Fiore. Simon Memmi means that *all* music must be “sacred.” Not that you are never to sing any-

thing but hymns ; but that whatever is rightly called music, or work of the Muses, is divine in help and healing.

The actions of both hands are singularly sweet. The right is one of the loveliest things I ever saw done in painting. She is keeping down one note only, with her third finger, seen under the raised fourth : the thumb, just passing under ; all the curves of the fingers exquisite, and the pale light and shade of the rosy flesh relieved against the ivory white and brown of the notes. Only the thumb and end of the forefinger are seen of the left hand, but they indicate enough its light pressure on the bellows. Fortunately, all these portions of the fresco are absolutely intact.

Underneath, Tubal-Cain. Not Jubal, as you would expect. Jubal is the inventor of musical instruments. Tubal-Cain, thought the old Florentines, invented harmony itself. They, the best smiths in the world, knew the differences in tones of hammer strokes on anvil. Curiously enough, the only piece of true part-singing, done beautifully and joyfully, which I have heard this year (1874) in Italy, (being south of Alps exactly six months, and ranging from Genoa to Palermo) was out of a busy smithy at Perugia. Of bestial howling, and entirely frantic vomiting up of hopelessly damned souls through their still carnal throats, I have heard more than, please God, I will ever endure the hearing of again, in one of His summers.

You think Tubal-Cain very ugly? Yes. Much like a shaggy baboon: not accidentally, but with most scientific understanding of baboon character. Men must have looked like that, before they had invented harmony, or felt that one note differed from another, says Simon Memmi. Darwinism, like all widely popular and widely mischievous fallacies, has many a curious gleam and grain of truth in its tissue.

Under Moses.

Medallion, a youth drinking. Otherwise, you might have thought only church music meant, and not feast music also.

Technical Points.—The Tubal-Cain, one of the most entirely pure and precious remnants of the old painting, nothing lost: and nothing but the redder ends of his beard retouched. Green dress of Music, in the body and over limbs, entirely repainted: it was once beautifully embroidered: sleeves, partly genuine, hands perfect, face and hair nearly so. Leaf crown faded and broken away, but not retouched.

V. ASTRONOMY. By her ancient name Astrology, as we say Theology, not Theonomy: the knowledge of so much of the stars as we can know wisely; not the attempt to define their laws for them. Not that it is unbecoming of us to find out, if we can, that they move in ellipses,

and so on ; but it is no business of ours. What effects their rising and setting have on man, and beast, and leaf; what their times and changes are, seen and felt in this world, it is our business to know, passing our nights, if wakefully, by that divine candlelight, and no other.

She wears a dark purple robe ; holds in her left hand the hollow globe with golden zodiac and meridians : lifts her right hand in noble awe.

“ When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained.”

Crowned with gold, her dark hair in elliptic waves, bound with glittering chains of pearl. Her eyes dark, lifted.

Beneath her, Zoroaster,* entirely noble and beautiful, the delicate Persian head made softer still by the elaborately wreathed silken hair, twisted into the pointed beard; and into tapering plaits, falling on his shoulders. The head entirely thrown back, he looks up with no distortion of the delicately arched brow : writing, as he gazes.

* Atlas ! according to poor Vasari, and sundry modern guides. I find Vasari's mistakes usually of this *brightly* blundering kind. In matters needing research, after a while, I find *he* is right, usually.

And I *did* find him right myself, after farther ‘research’—the ‘Atlas’ in question being the builder and first king of Fésole ! but how far Magian or Persian, I know not ; only in the fresco he is, I believe, represented as watching the stars for the hour to lay the first stone of his city.—J. R., Florence, October, 1882.

For the association of the religion of the Magi with their own, in the mind of the Florentines of this time, see "Before the Soldan."

The dress must always have been white, because of its beautiful opposition to the purple above and that of Tubal-Cain beside it. But it has been too much repainted to be trusted anywhere, nothing left but a fold or two in the sleeves. The cast of it from the knees down is entirely beautiful, and I suppose on the old lines; but the restorer also could throw a fold well when he chose. The warm light which relieves the purple of Atlas above, is lain in by him. I don't know if I should have liked it better, flat, as it was, against the dark purple; it seems to me quite beautiful now. The full red flush on the face of the Astronomy is the restorer's doing also. She was much paler, if not quite pale.

Under St. Luke.

Medallion, a stern man, with sickle and spade.
For the flowers, and for us, when stars have risen
and set such and such times;—remember.

Technical Points.—Left hand, globe, most of the important folds of the purple dress, eyes, mouth, hair in great part, and crown, genuine. Golden tracery on border of dress lost; extremity of falling folds from left sleeve altered and confused, but the confusion prettily got out of. Right hand and much of face and dress repainted.

Zoroaster's head quite pure. Dress repainted, but carefully, leaving the hair untouched. Right hand and pen, now a common feathered quill, entirely repainted, but dexterously and with feeling. The hand was once slightly different in position, and held, most probably, a style.

VI. GEOMETRY. You have now learned, young ladies and gentlemen, to read, to speak, to think, to sing, and to see. You are getting old, and will have soon to think of being married ; you must learn to build your house, therefore. Here is your carpenter's square for you, and you may safely and wisely contemplate the ground a little, and the measures and laws relating to that, seeing you have got to abide upon it :—and have properly looked at the stars ; not before then, lest, had you studied the ground first, you might perchance never have raised your heads from it.

Geometry is here considered as the arbitress of all laws of practical labour, issuing in beauty.

She looks down, a little puzzled, greatly interested, holding her carpenter's square in her left hand, not wanting that but for practical work ; following a diagram with her right.

Her beauty, altogether soft and in curves, I commend to your notice, as the exact opposite of what a vulgar designer would have imagined for her. Note the wreath of hair at the back of her head, which, though fastened by a *spiral* fillet,

escapes at last, and flies off loose in a sweeping curve. Contemplative Theology is the only other of the sciences who has such wavy hair.

Beneath her, Euclid, in white turban. Very fine and original work throughout ; but nothing of special interest in him.

Under St. Matthew.

Medallion, a soldier with a straight sword (best for science of defence), octagon shield, helmet like the beehive cap of Canton Vaud. As the secondary use of music in feasting, so the secondary use of geometry in war—her noble art being all in sweetest peace—is shown in the medallion.

Technical Points.—It is more than fortunate that in nearly every figure, the original outline of the hair is safe. Geometry's has scarcely been retouched at all, except at the ends, once in single knots, now in confused double ones. The hands, girdle, most of the dress, and her black carpenter's square are original. Face and breast repainted.

VII. ARITHMETIC. Having built your house, young people, and understanding the light of heaven, and the measures of earth, you may marry—and can't do better. And here is now your conclusive science, which you will have to apply, all your days, to all your affairs.

The Science of Number. Infinite in solemnity of use in Italy at this time ; including, of course,

whatever was known of the higher abstract mathematics and mysteries of numbers, but reverenced especially in its vital necessity to the prosperity of families and kingdoms ; and first fully so understood here in commercial Florence.

Her hand lifted, with two fingers bent, two straight, solemnly enforcing on your attention her primal law—Two and two are—four, you observe,—not five, as those unhappy usurers think.

Under her, Pythagoras.

Above, medallion of king, with sceptre and globe, counting money. Have you ever chanced to read carefully Carlyle's account of the foundation of the existing Prussian empire, in economy ?

You can, at all events, consider with yourself a little, what empire this Queen of the terrestrial sciences must hold over the rest, if they are to be put to good use ; or what depth and breadth of application there is in the brief parables of the counted cost of Power, and number of Armies.

To give a very minor, but characteristic instance. I have always felt that with my intense love of the Alps, I ought to have been able to make a drawing of Chamouni, or the vale of Cluse, which should give people more pleasure than a photograph ; but I always wanted to do it as I saw it, and engrave pine for pine, and crag for crag, like Albert Durer. I broke my strength down for many a year, always tiring of my work, or finding the

leaves drop off, or the snow come on, before I had well begun what I meant to do. If I had only *counted* my pines first, and calculated the number of hours necessary to do them in the manner of Durer, I should have saved the available drawing time of some five years, spent in vain effort. But Turner counted his pines, and did all that could be done for them, and rested content with that.

And how often in greater affairs of life, the arithmetical part of the business must become the dominant one! How many and how much have we? How many and how much do we want? How constantly does noble Arithmetic of the finite lose itself in base Avarice of the Infinite, and in blind imagination of it! In counting of minutes, is our arithmetic ever solicitous enough? In counting our days, is she ever severe enough? How we shrink from reckoning in their decades, the diminished store of them! And if we ever pray the solemn prayer that we may be taught to number them, do we even try to do it after praying?

Technical Points.—The Pythagoras almost entirely genuine. The upper figures, from this inclusive to the outer wall, I have not been able to examine thoroughly, my scaffolding not extending beyond the Geometry.

Here then we have the sum of sciences,—seven,

according to the Florentine mind—necessary to the secular education of man and woman. Of these the modern average respectable English gentleman and gentlewoman know usually only a little of the last, and entirely hate the prudent applications of that : being unacquainted, except as they chance here and there to pick up a broken piece of information, with either grammar, rhetoric, music,* astronomy, or geometry ; and are not only unacquainted with logic, or the use of reason, themselves, but instinctively antagonistic to its use by anybody else.

We are now to read the series of the Divine sciences, beginning at the opposite side, next the window.

SECTION II.

*The Seven Heavenly Sciences; read from left to right;
from the corner next the window to the centre of the
wall.*

I. CIVIL LAW. Civil, or ‘of citizens,’ not only as distinguished from Ecclesiastical, but from *Local* law. She is the universal Justice of the peaceful relations of men throughout the world, therefore holds the globe, with its *three* quarters, white, as being justly governed, in her left hand.

She is also the law of eternal *equity*, not of *erring statute*; therefore holds her sword *level* across her breast.

* In all the classic, simple, and eternal modes of it.

She is the foundation of all other divine science.
To know anything whatever about God, you must
begin by being Just.

Dressed in red, *which in these frescoes is always a sign of power, or zeal*; but her face very calm, gentle, and beautiful. Her hair bound close, and crowned by the royal circlet of gold, with pure thirteenth century strawberry leaf ornament.

Under her, the Emperor Justinian, in blue, with conical mitre of white and gold; the face in profile, very beautiful. The imperial staff in his right hand, the Institutes in his left.

Medallion, a figure, apparently in distress, appealing for justice. (Trajan's suppliant widow?)

Technical Points.—The three divisions of the globe in her hand were originally inscribed ASIA, AFRICA, EUROPE. The restorer has ingeniously changed AF into AME—RICA. Faces, both of the science and emperor, little retouched, nor any of the rest altered.

II. CHRISTIAN LAW. After the justice which rules men, comes that which rules the Church of Christ. The distinction is not between secular law, and ecclesiastical authority, but between the rough equity of humanity, and the discriminate compassion of Christian discipline.

In full, straight-falling, golden robe, with white mantle over it; a church in her left hand; her

right raised, with the forefinger lifted ; (indicating heavenly source of all Christian law ? or warning?)

Head-dress, a white veil floating into folds in the air. You will find nothing in these frescoes without significance ; and as the escaping hair of Geometry indicates the infinite conditions of lines of the higher orders, so the floating veil here indicates that the higher relations of Christian justice are indefinable. So her golden mantle signifies that it is a glorious and excellent justice beyond that which unchristian men conceive ; while the severely falling lines of the folds, which form a kind of gabled niche for the head of the Pope beneath, correspond with the strictness of true Church discipline, and of the firmer as well as more luminous statute.

Beneath, Pope Clement V., in red, lifting his hand, not in the position of benediction, but, I suppose, of injunction,—only the forefinger straight, the second a little bent, the two last quite. Note the strict level of the book ; and the vertical directness of the key.

The medallion puzzles me. It looks like a figure counting money.*

Technical Points.—Fairly well preserved ; but the face of the Science retouched : the grotesquely false perspective of the Pope's tiara, one of the

* Probably a doctor expounding laws : the points of his fingers being touched in order.—(G. C.)

most curiously naïve examples of the entirely ignorant feeling after merely scientific truth of form which still characterized Italian art.

Type of church interesting in its extreme simplicity ; no idea of transept, campanile, or dome.

III. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY. The beginning of the knowledge of God being Human Justice, and its elements defined by Christian Law, the application of the law so defined follows, first with respect to man, then with respect to God.

“ Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s —and to God the things that are God’s.”

We have therefore now following, two sciences, one of our duty to men, the other to their Maker.

This is the first : duty to men. She holds a circular medallion, representing Christ preaching on the Mount, and points with her right hand to the earth.

The sermon on the Mount is perfectly expressed by the craggy pinnacle in front of Christ, and the high dark horizon. There is curious evidence throughout all these frescoes of Simon Memmi’s having read the Gospels with a quite clear understanding of their innermost meaning.

I have called this science, Practical Theology :—the instructive knowledge, that is to say, of what God would have us do, personally, in any given human relation : and the speaking His Gospel

therefore by act. “ Let your light so shine before men.”

She wears a green dress, like Music ; her hair in the Arabian arch, with jewelled diadem.

Under David.

Medallion, Almsgiving.

Beneath her, Peter Lombard.

Technical Points.—It is curious that while the instinct of perspective was not strong enough to enable any painter at this time to foreshorten a foot, it yet suggested to them the expression of elevation by raising the horizon.

I have not examined the retouching. The hair and diadem at least are genuine, the face is dignified and compassionate, and much on the old lines.

IV. DEVOTIONAL THEOLOGY. Giving glory to God, or, more accurately, whatever feelings He desires us to have towards Him, whether of affection or awe.

This is the science or method of *devotion* for Christians universally, just as the Practical Theology is their science or method of *action*.

In blue and red : a narrow black rod still traceable in the left hand ; I am not sure of its meaning. (“ Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me ? ”) The other hand open in admiration, like Astronomy’s ; but Devotion’s is held at her breast.

Her head very characteristic of Memmi, with upturned eyes, and Arab arch in hair.

Beneath her, Boethius.

Medallion, a mother lifting her hands : teaching her child the first elements of religion ?

Under St. Paul.

Technical Points.—Both figures very genuine, and the painting of Boethius's black book, as of the red one in the next fresco, worth notice, showing how pleasant and interesting the commonest things become, when well painted.

V: DOGMATIC THEOLOGY. After action and worship, thought becoming too wide and difficult, the need of dogma becomes felt ; the assertion that is, within limited range, of the things that are to be believed.

Since whatever pride and folly pollute Christian scholarship naturally delight in dogma, the science itself cannot but be in a kind of disgrace among sensible men : nevertheless it would be difficult to overvalue the peace and security which have been given to humble persons by forms of creed ; and it is evident that either there is no such thing as theology, or some of its knowledge must be thus, if not expressible, at least reducible within certain limits of expression, so as to be protected from misinterpretation.

In red,—again the sign of power,—crowned

with a black (once golden?) triple* crown, emblematic of the Trinity. The left hand holding a scoop for winnowing corn; the other points upwards. "Prove all things—hold fast that which is good, or of God."

Under her, Dionysius the Areopagite—mending his pen! But I am doubtful of Lord Lindsay's identification of this figure, and the action is curiously common and meaningless. It may have meant that meditative theology is essentially a writer, not a preacher.-

Medallion, female figure laying hands on breast.†
Under St. Mark.

Technical Points.—I have not examined the upper figure; the lower one is almost entirely genuine, and the painting of the red book quite exemplary in fresco style.

VI. MYSTIC THEOLOGY.‡ Monastic science, above dogma, and attaining to new revelation by reaching higher spiritual states.

In white robes, her left hand gloved (I don't know why)§—holding chalice. She wears a nun's veil

* Three-cusped, better than triple, which would mean the papal tiara; and I think it was *outlined* with black only.—(G. C.)

† The right laid on the breast, the left holds her girdle.—(G. C.)

‡ Blunderingly in the guide-books called 'Faith'!

§ I think the remnant of a falcon's wing is traceable above the hand.—(G.C.) Well,—but if so—why? Monks don't ride

fastened under her chin, her hair fastened close, like Grammar's, showing her necessarily monastic life; all states of mystic spiritual life involving retreat from much that is allowable in the material and practical world.

There is no possibility of denying this fact, infinite as the evils are which have arisen from misconception of it. They have been chiefly induced by persons who falsely pretended to lead monastic life, and led it without having natural faculty for it. But many more lamentable errors have arisen from the pride of really noble persons, who have thought it would be a more pleasing thing to God to be a sybil or a witch, than a useful housewife. Pride is always somewhat involved even in the true effort: the scarlet head-dress in the form of a horn on the forehead in the fresco may perhaps indicate this, both here, and in the Contemplative Theology.

Under St. John.

Medallion unintelligible, to me. A woman laying hands on the shoulders* of two small figures.

Technical Points.—More of the minute folds of the white dress left than in any other of the repainted draperies. It is curious that minute division has always in drapery, more or less, been

a-hawking. Does it mean the falcon's sight—or soaring—or is it the Egyptian falcon emblem of immortality?

* No, reaching out to them.—(G. C.)

understood as an expression of spiritual life, from the delicate folds of Athena's peplus down to the rippled edges of modern priests' white robes ; Titian's breadth of fold, on the other hand, meaning for the most part bodily power. The relation of the two modes of composition was lost by Michael Angelo, who thought to express spirit by making flesh colossal.

For the rest, the figure is not of any interest, Memmi's own mind being intellectual rather than mystic.

VII. POLEMIC THEOLOGY.*

“Who goes forth, conquering and to conquer ?”

“For we war, not with flesh and blood,” etc.

In red, as sign of power, but not in armour, because she is herself invulnerable. A close red cap, with cross for crest, instead of helmet. Bow in left hand ; long arrow in right.

She partly means Aggressive Logic : compare the set of her shoulders and arms with Logic's.

She is placed the last of the Heavenly sciences, not as their culminating power, but as the last which can be rightly learned. You must know all the others, before you go out to battle. Whereas the general principle of modern Christendom is to go out to battle without knowing *any one* of the others ! one of the reasons for this error, the prince of errors, being the vulgar notion that truth may be

* Blunderingly called ‘Charity’ in the guide-books.

ascertained by debate ! Truth is never learned, in any department of industry, by arguing, but by working, and observing. And when you have got good hold of one truth, for certain, two others will grow out of it, in a beautifully dicotyledonous fashion, (which, as before noticed, is the meaning of the branch in Logic's right hand). Then, when you have got so much true knowledge as is worth fighting for, you are bound to *fight*,*—or to die for it ; but not to debate about it, any more.

There is, however, one further reason for Polemic Theology being put beside Mystic. It is only in some approach to mystic science that any man becomes aware of what St. Paul means by “spiritual wickedness in heavenly† places ;” or, in any true sense, knows the enemies of God and of man.

Beneath, St. Augustine. Showing you the proper method of controversy ;—perfectly firm ; perfectly gentle.

You are to distinguish, of course, controversy from rebuke. The assertion of truth is to be always gentle : the chastisement of wilful falsehood may be—very much the contrary indeed. Christ's sermon on the Mount is full of polemic theology,

* I will not encumber this letter with a defence of Holy Wars, whether defensive as that for the Scottish Covenant, or aggressive as the Mahometans under the four great Caliphs : the sentence is, I believe, hitherto the only one in which my opinion about them has been stated.

† With cowardly intentional fallacy, translated ‘high’ in the English Bible.

yet perfectly gentle :—“Ye have heard that it hath been said—but *I* say unto you”;—“And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?” and the like. But His “Ye fools and blind, for whether is greater,” is not merely the exposure of error, but rebuke of the avarice which made that error possible.

Under the throne of St. Thomas; and next to Arithmetic, of the earthly sciences.

MedalMon, a soldier, but not interesting.

Technical Points.—Very genuine and beautiful throughout. Note the use of St. Augustine’s red bands, to connect him with the full red of the upper figure; and compare the niche formed by the dress of Canon Law, above the Pope, for different artistic methods of attaining the same object,—unity of composition.

But lunch time is near, my friends, and you have that shopping to do, you know.





